

terms of whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the user; and

distributing the additional product information to a user automatically corresponding to the additional products that can be used with the product used by the user and which match the user's requested information type.

20. (AS ONCE AMENDED) The product information distributed to the user as claimed in claim 18, wherein said product information distributed to the user includes a plurality of product information correlating to products used by the user as indicated by the user information.

REMARKS

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-20 were previously pending.

Claim 9 is canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer.

Various claims are amended. Support for the amendments can be found throughout the Specification, including pages 34-35.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-8 and 10-20 are submitted for consideration herein.

II. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-20 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Page 2 of the Action rejects claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hill, U.S. Patent No. 5,761,649 (Hereinafter "Hill") in view of Peschel, Joe, "Unfurled" (Hereinafter "Peschel") and further in view of Bison, Gauzily, "Mpresswire" (Hereinafter "Bison").

On page 3 of the Action, the Examiner states that, 'The Examiner considers the support files disclosed by Hill as the equivalent of the claimed "products which can be used in combination with products that are used by the users". . . Again, the Examiner considers the drivers as products used in combination with products on the user's system.'

Claim 1 (as amended) recites, ". . . wherein the user registration information comprises personal information about each user containing an identification number of each user and registration information containing a type of information which is requested by the users with regard to the computer-related products, said type of information can include information about products which can be used in combination with products that are used by the users and available from a plurality of vendors . . ."

The system disclosed in Hill is used for receiving information from only one particular vendor. Multiple vendors in Hill cannot share information. Therefore the "support files" in Hill do not describe products which can be used in combination with products that are used by the users and available from a plurality of vendors.

The drivers disclosed in Peschel are for use only with a product sold by the same vendor that makes the driver. For example, a driver for Netscape would be made available by the Netscape corporation and provided by the Netscape corporation to the oil change database.

In contrast, the claimed type of information includes information about products which can be used in combination with products that are used by the users and available from a plurality of vendors.

For example, for illustrative purposes only, in one embodiment of the present invention as recited in claim 1, the invention can share information from multiple vendors. Thus, as an example, a user of Netscape may desire to receive information about a Flash plug-in available from the Macromedia corporation.

Oil Change, in contrast, only replaces programs which have a more recent version or driver stored on the oil change database. Thus, with oil change, a user would already have to possess a Flash plug-in for his Netscape browser, in order for this Flash plug-in to be updated.

Page 3 of the Action states that, 'The customized version of *Oil Change* will updates the drivers for all of the peripherals and components in the Sony PC, as well as Sony-specific software" (page 14).' Thus, Oil Change updates drivers which are vendor-specific. While the database in Oil Change (unlike Hill) does contain information from a plurality of vendors, nevertheless information from one vendor is not shared with users of products made by another vendor.

Thus, because of the claimed "new information . . . transmitted to said user registration/reference means" may comprise (as one example only, in one embodiment of the present invention) information about products from a plurality of vendors, the combination of the cited references do not disclose such a system. The advantages of the present invention as discussed above result in a system which is superior to Hill or Peschel, in that in one embodiment of the present invention, information about products can be sent to a larger number of potentially interested users.

Moreover, the combination of references do not suggest, ". . . wherein the user registration information comprises personal information about each user containing an identification number of each user and registration information containing a type of information which is requested by the users with regard to the computer-related products, said type of information can include information about products which can be used in combination with products that are used by the users and available from a plurality of vendors." Nothing in either of the cited references suggests information about products which can be used in combination with products that are used by the users and available from a plurality of vendors. As stated above, all of the references are "vendor-specific." Sharing information between vendors in Peschel would not be logical, because the goal in Oil Change is to maintain up to date drivers, and drivers and programs only operate properly by replacing their corresponding outdated ones, which come from the same vendor.

In addition, claim 1 is also amended to recite, "and said type of information further signifies difference in vendor of said products that can be used in combination with products

that are used by the user, in terms of whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the user."

As stated above, Hill only supports one vendor. Further, Peschel is limited to delivering products by a vendor to a user of that vendor's product. However, Peschel does not disclose or suggest the claimed type of information which signifies a difference in vendor of the products that can be used in combination with products that are used by the user, in terms of whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the user. Peschel does not even relate to difference in vendors, as claimed.

Independent claims 10-16 and 18-19 are amended similarly to claim 1, and for the above reasons, should also be allowed over the cited art.

Dependent claims 2-9, 17 and 20 are dependent upon the above mentioned independent claims, and should be allowed in at least due to their dependency.

Therefore, in view of the above amendments, the rejected claims are not unpatentable over Hill, and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

III. CONCLUSION

If the Examiner has any remaining informalities to be addressed, it is believed that prosecution can be expedited by the Examiner contacting the undersigned attorney for a telephone interview to discuss resolution of such informalities.

If any further fees are required in connection with the filing of this Amendment, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY

Date: 3-29-01

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please CANCEL claim 9, without prejudice or disclaimer.


Please AMEND the claims as follows: (all of the claims are listed below, whether or not amended)

1 1. (FOUR TIMES AMENDED) A computer implemented management system, which
2 manages registration of computer-related products, including hardware and software products,
3 comprising:

4 a user information general management means, generally managing user registration
5 information, about users of hardware and software products, and using status information
6 thereof transmitted from the user; and

7 a user registration/reference means that interfaces with the users notifying said user
8 information general management means of the user registration information and the using
9 status information at a request of the user and the using status information,

10 wherein the user registration information comprises personal information about
11 each user containing an identification number of each user and registration information
12 containing a type of information which is requested by the users with regard to the computer-
13 related products, said type of information can include information about products which can be
14 used in combination with products that are used by the users and available from a plurality of
15 vendors, and said type of information further signifies difference in vendor of said products



16 that can be used in combination with products that are used by the user, in terms of whether
17 the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the user, and
18 new information about the computer-related products from a vendor side of the
19 computer-related products is extracted, depending on information extraction condition
20 containing a requested information type in the registration information, and is transmitted to
21 said user registration/reference means from said user information general management means
22 to provide the new information.

1 2. (AS ONCE AMENDED) The system according to claim 1, wherein
2 said user registration/reference means requests at a request from the user said user
3 information general management means to provide new information about the computer-related
4 product from a vendor of the computer-related product.

1 3. (AS ONCE AMENDED) The system according to claim 1, wherein
2 the computer-related product is a software product, and said user registration/reference
3 means is common to each of a plurality of software products;
4 when any of the plurality of software products is installed by a user, the user
5 registration/reference means is also installed; and
6 after installation, said user registration/reference means issues a notification about the
7 user registration information and using status information for the plurality of software products
8 which are installed, and submits a request for new information about the software product.

1 4. (AS ONCE AMENDED) The system according to claim 1, wherein
2 said user registration information comprises:

3 personal information about each user including an
4 identification number of each user; and

5 registration information containing a type of information
6 requested by the user about a computer related product; and

7 said user information general management means extracts the new information
8 depending on information extraction condition containing a requested information type in the
9 registration information at a request for new information about a computer-related product
10 from said user registration/reference means, and transmits the new information to said user
11 registration/reference means.

1 5. (AS ONCE AMENDED) The system according to claim 1, wherein
2 the computer-related product is a software product and the using status information
3 contains the number of times the software product was started; and

4 said user information general management means transmits new information about the
5 software product to said user registration/reference means depending on the number of times
6 the software product was started.

1 6. (AS ONCE AMENDED) The system according to claim 1, wherein

2 the computer-related product is a software product and the using status information
3 contains the number of times the software product was started; and
4 said user registration/reference means requests said user information general
5 management means to provide new information about the software product when the number of
6 times the software product was started has reached a predetermined value.

1 7. (AS ONCE AMENDED) The system according to claim 1, further comprising:
2 a vendor registration/reference means for obtaining the user registration information
3 and the using status information from said user information general management means, and
4 notifying said user information general management means of new information about the
5 computer-related product.

1 8. (AS ONCE AMENDED) The system according to claim 7, wherein
2 the user registration information contains a type of information, requested by a user,
3 about a computer-related product;
4 said vendor registration/reference means specifies a type of new information when new
5 information about the computer-related product is available; and
6 said user information general management means compares the type of information
7 requested by the user with the type specified by the vendor registration/reference means, and
8 when both types coincide, transmits the new information to said user registration/reference
9 means at a request from said user registration/reference means when the requested information

10 is available.

1 9. (CANCELED)

1 10. (FOUR TIMES AMENDED) A management apparatus which manages user
2 information about a computer-related product used by a user terminal connected through a
3 network, comprising:

4 a user information general management means for managing using status information
5 and a requested information type provided by the user terminal about a product used by a user;

6 a product information management means for managing product information provided
7 by a vendor of the computer-related product including product information about additional
8 products that can be used with a particular product; and

9 a product information notification means for referring to a product used by each user
10 managed by said user information general management means and for providing product
11 information managed by said product information management means about a product used by
12 a user which corresponds to the products available from a plurality of vendors that can be used
13 with the product used by the user and match the user's requested information type, wherein
14 said information further signifies difference in vendor of said products that can be used in
15 combination with products that are used by the user, in terms of whether the vendor is the
16 same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the user.

1 11. (FOUR TIMES AMENDED) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with
2 software to cause a computer to perform the actions of:

3 managing using status information and a requested information type provided by a user
4 terminal about a product used by a user;

5 managing product information provided by a computer-related product vendor including
6 product information about additional products available from a plurality of vendors that can be
7 used with a particular product, wherein said information further signifies difference in vendor
8 of said products that can be used in combination with products that are used by the user, in
9 terms of whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by
10 the user; and

11 referring to the using status information and providing product information about
12 additional products that can be used with the product used by a user and which corresponds to
13 the requested information type at a product information request from the user terminal.

1 12. (FOUR TIMES AMENDED) A user terminal apparatus comprising:

2 a user information notification means for notifying an external unit of user registration
3 information and using status information including a product used by a user and a requested
4 information type about the computer-related product; and

5 a product information reference means for requesting an external unit for new
6 information about the computer-related product which corresponds to the requested
7 information type from a computer-related product vendor and information on additional

8 products available from a plurality of vendors that can be used with the product used by the
9 user, and said information further signifies difference in vendor of said products that can be
10 used in combination with products that are used by the user, in terms of whether the vendor is
11 the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the user.

1 13. (FOUR TIMES AMENDED) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with
2 software for causing a computer to perform the actions of:

3 notifying an external unit of user registration information and using status information
4 including a product used by a user and a requested information type about a computer-related
5 product used by a user; and

6 requesting an external unit for new information about the computer-related product
7 which corresponds to the requested information type from a vendor of the computer related
8 product and information on additional products available from a plurality of vendors that can
9 be used with the product used by the user, and said information further signifies difference in
10 vendor of said products that can be used in combination with products that are used by the
11 user, in terms of whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are
12 used by the user.

1 14. (FOUR TIMES AMENDED) A vendor terminal apparatus comprising:

2 a user information reference means for obtaining, from an external unit, user
3 registration information including a requested information type and using status information

4 including a product used by the user transmitted from a user of a computer-related product;

5 and

6 a product information notification means for notifying an external unit of new
7 information about the computer-related product, if the new information about the computer-
8 related product corresponds to the requested information type, the new information including
9 additional products available from a plurality of vendors that can be used with the product used
10 by the user, and said information further signifies difference in vendor of said products that
11 can be used in combination with products that are used by the user, in terms of whether the
12 vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the user.

1 15. (FOUR TIMES AMENDED) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with
2 software to cause a computer to perform the actions of:

3 obtaining, from an external unit, user registration information including a requested
4 information type, and using status information including a product used by a user, transmitted
5 from the user of a computer-related product; and

6 notifying an external unit of new information about the computer-related product, if the
7 new information about the computer-related product corresponds to the requested information
8 type, the new information including additional products available from a plurality of vendors
9 that can be used with the product used by the user, and said information further signifies
10 difference in vendor of said products that can be used in combination with products that are
11 used by the user, in terms of whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the

12 products that are used by the user.

1 16. (THREE AMENDED) A computer implemented management system, which
2 manages registration of computer-related products, comprising:
3 a user information general management module generally managing user registration
4 information including a requested information type, and using status information including a
5 product used by a user, transmitted from a user of the computer-related product; and
6 a user registration/reference module that interfaces with a user of the computer-related
7 products notifying said user information general management module of the user registration
8 information and the using status information and information about additional products
9 available from a plurality of vendors that can be used with the product used by the user at a
10 request of the user who uses a computer-related product related to the user registration
11 information and the using status information and which corresponds to the requested
12 information type, wherein said information further signifies difference in vendor of said
13 products that can be used in combination with products that are used by the user, in terms of
14 whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the
15 user.

1 17. (AS ORIGINAL) The system according to claim 16, wherein
2 the computer-related product is a software product, and said user registration/reference
3 module is common to each of a plurality of software products;

4 when any of the plurality of software products is installed by a user, the user
5 registration/reference module is also installed; and
6 after installation, said user registration/reference means issues a notification about the
7 user registration information and using status information for the plurality of software products
8 which are installed, and submits a request for new information about the software product.

1 18. (THREE TIMES AMENDED) A user registration center managing and
2 distributing information provided by both a user and a vendor comprising:
3 a database receiving, from the vendor product information about a product and
4 additional product information about additional products that can be used with the product;
5 the database receiving, from the user, user information which includes a product used
6 by the user and a requested information type from the user; and
7 a distributing module, automatically distributing to the user, additional product
8 information corresponding to the additional products available from a plurality of vendors that
9 can be used with the product used by the user and which match the user's requested
10 information type, wherein said information further signifies difference in vendor of said
11 products that can be used in combination with products that are used by the user, in terms of
12 whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the
13 user.

1 19. (THREE TIMES AMENDED) A method of managing and distributing
2 information provided by both a user and a vendor comprising:
3 receiving, from the vendor, product information about a product and additional product
4 information about additional products that can be used with the product;
5 receiving, from the user, user information which includes a product used by the user
6 and and a requested information type from the user;
7 storing the product information about a product and additional product information
8 about products available from a plurality of vendors that can be used with the product and the
9 user information which includes a product user by the user and the requested information type
10 from the user, all in a database, wherein said information further signifies difference in vendor
11 of said products that can be used in combination with products that are used by the user, in
12 terms of whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by
13 the user; and
14 distributing the additional product information to a user automatically corresponding to
15 the additional products that can be used with the product used by the user and which match the
16 user's requested information type.

1 20. (AS ONCE AMENDED) The product information distributed to the user as
2 claimed in claim 18, wherein said product information distributed to the user includes a
3 plurality of product information correlating to products used by the user as indicated by the
user information.